Numb. CLXXIV.

The GUARDIAN.

Salve Pœoniæ largitor nobilis undæ,
Salve Dardanii gloria magna ſoli:
Publica morborum requies, commune medentum
Auxilium, præſens numen, inempta ſalus. Claud.

Wedneſday, September 30. 1713.

IN publick Aſſemblies there are generally ſome envious ſplenetick People, who having no Merit to procure Reſpect, are ever finding Fault with thoſe who diſtinguiſh themſelves. This happens more frequently at thoſe Places, where this Seaſon of the Year calls Perſons of both Sexes together for their Health. I have had Rheams of Letters from *Bath*, *Epſom*, *Tunbridge*, and St. *Wenefride*'s Well; wherein I could obſerve that a Concern for Honour and Virtue proceeded from the want of Health, Beauty, or fine Petticoats. A Lady, who ſubſcribes her ſelf *Eudoſia*, writes a bitter Invective againſt *Chloe* the celebrated Dancer; but I have learned, that ſhe her ſelf is lame of the Rheumatiſm. Another, who hath been a Prude, ever ſince ſhe had the Small-Pox, is very bitter againſt the Coquets, and their indecent Airs; and a ſharp Wit hath ſent me a keen Epigram againſt the Gameſters; but I took Notice, that it was not written upon gilt Paper.

Having had ſeveral ſtrange Pieces of Intelligence from the *Bath*; as, that more Conſtitutions were weakened there than repaired; that the Phyſicians were not more buſie in deſtroying old Bodies, than the young Fellows in producing new ones; with ſeveral other Common-Place Strokes of Raillery: I reſolved to look upon the Company there, as I returned lately out of the Country. It was a great Jeſt to ſee ſuch a grave ancient Perſon, as I am, in an embroidered Cap and Brocade Night-Gown: But, beſides the Neceſſity of complying with the Cuſtom, by theſe Means I paſt undiſcovered, and had a Pleaſure, I much covet, of being alone in a Crowd. It was no little Satisfaction to me, to view the mixt Maſs of all Ages and Dignities upon a Level, partaking of the ſame Benefits of Nature, and mingling in the ſame Diverſions. I ſometimes entertained my ſelf, by obſerving what a large Quantity of Ground was hidden under ſpreading Petticoats; and what little Patches of Earth were covered by Creatures with Wiggs and Hats, in Compariſon to thoſe Spaces that were diſtinguiſhed by Flounces, Fringes, and Furbelows. From the Earth, my Fancy was diverted to the Water, where the Diſtinctions of Sex and Condition are concealed; and where the mixture of Men and Women hath given Occaſion to ſome Perſons of light Imaginations, to compare *the Bath* to the Fountain of *Salmacis*, which had the Virtue of joining the two Sexes in one Perſon; or to the Stream wherein *Diana* waſhed her ſelf, when ſhe beſtowed Horns on *Actæon*: But by one of a ſerious Turn, theſe healthful Springs may rather be likened to the *Stygian* Waters, which made the Body invulnerable; or to the River of *Lethe*, one Draught of which waſhed away all Pain and Anguiſh in a Moment.

As I have taken upon me a Name which ought to abound in Humanity, I ſhall make it my Buſineſs, in this Paper, to cool and aſſwage thoſe malignant Humours of Scandal which run throughout the Body of Men and Women there aſſembled; and, after the manner of thoſe famous Waters, I will endeavour to wipe away all foul Aſperſions, to reſtore Bloom and Vigour to decayed Reputations, and ſet injured Characters upon their Legs again. I ſhall herein regulate my ſelf, by the Example of that good Man, who uſed to talk with Charity of the greateſt Villains; nor was ever heard to ſpeak with Rigor of any one, till he affirmed with Severity that *Nero* was a Wag.

Having thus prepared thee, gentle Reader, I ſhall not ſcruple to entertain thee with a Panegyric upon the Gameſters. I have indeed ſpoken incautiouſly heretofore of that Claſs of Men; but I ſhould forfeit all Titles to Modeſty, ſhould I any longer oppoſe the common Senſe of the Nobility and

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